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SENSITIVE  
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SUBJECT: OIC-USG COOPERATION ON POLIO: NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING  
JEDDAH MEETINGS

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: OIC officials are ready and willing to cooperate on the joint initiative to eradicate polio proposed by President Obama in his Cairo speech -- although they need to obtain a final endorsement from OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu. The OIC's institutional limitations suggest that it is better suited to engaging in a political and diplomatic initiative, while the GCC could be better placed to provide technical cooperation (septel). USDEL and OIC counterparts discussed a number of possible next steps, including activities on the margins of the upcoming UN General Assembly, with a major event for the 40th anniversary of the OIC and an OIC ministerial meeting noted as two possibilities among them.

¶2. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: The OIC requested that the U.S. provide asap a list of proposals for joint political/diplomatic activities that could be undertaken in furtherance of the polio initiative. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

POLIO'S LAST MILE IS THE HARDEST  
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BUT THE OIC IS READY TO HELP  
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¶3. (SBU) OIC officials including Ufuk Gokcen, Adviser to the Secretary General, and Razley Nordin, Director General of the OIC Science and Technology Committee, met July 26 with representatives from CDC, USAID, Embassy Riyadh, and ConGen Jeddah to follow up President Obama's announcement in Cairo of a new joint initiative to combat polio. The OIC officials took the point that a high proportion of the remaining cases of polio are within OIC member states or countries with significant Muslim populations (especially Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) and that a concerted push from Muslim leaders, organizations, and religious figures would be the most effective strategy towards final eradication of the disease. Gokcen confirmed that "at the political/diplomatic level, the OIC is willing to do whatever needs to be done." Gokcen and his colleagues felt generally that the resources of the OIC would be best used for diplomatic efforts aimed at moving member states toward greater action on polio as well as creating opportunities and events that bring additional attention to polio throughout the Islamic world.

## NEXT STEPS

14. (SBU) Based on points supplied by Department, the USDEL discussed a number of potential next steps, including:

1A. Letters to Leaders: The OIC agreed that letters from the Secretary General or OIC member heads of state could be a useful way to focus the attention of the leaders of polio-afflicted states, and proposed that President Obama send similar letters.

1B. Joint Delegations: The OIC was receptive to the idea of sending joint U.S./OIC delegations to key countries to meet with officials responsible for polio eradication.

1C. OIC Polio Envoy: OIC officials indicated that the OIC could appoint a special envoy for polio, including the possibility that this envoy might be someone of celebrity status in order to bring greater awareness of the need to eradicate polio.

1D. Joint Events in Endemic Countries: OIC officials expressed interest in the idea of holding an advocacy event, most likely in Pakistan or Nigeria, in order to draw attention to the issue of polio eradication, and preferably in connection with the beginning of an immunization campaign in the selected country.

1E. Cooperation with the GCC: OIC officials responded very positively to the idea of incorporating the GCC into the initiative, noting that the GCC and its member countries have greater technical and financial resources than the OIC. Gokcen agreed that the proposal suggested a division of labor wherein the GCC provides technical expertise within the

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larger framework of OIC cooperation with the U.S.

1F. Fiqh Academy: The OIC noted it has approached the OIC-related Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) academy to request a new fatwa, or religious decree, urging Muslims to adhere to recognized standards of polio prevention. This would be the second such fatwa. The first was issued under the name of a single scholar only; the new fatwa would carry more weight since it would be issued by the Jeddah-based academy as a whole.

## UNGA OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES

15. (SBU) USDEL also discussed possible follow-up actions connected to the upcoming UN General Assembly, including:

1A. Follow-up meeting in NY/DC: Gokcen and other OIC officials will be in New York in September and October for the UN General Assembly, and would like to have a follow-up meeting at that time in New York or Washington. Due to tight scheduling constraints, it was suggested that planning for this meeting begin immediately.

1B. 40th Anniversary of the OIC: The OIC will host a reception for heads of state at the Waldorf Astoria in New York September 24 to commemorate its 40th anniversary. Gokcen said he expected substantial high level attendance from OIC member states, and agreed that the event would be an ideal platform to raise awareness and support for polio eradication, possibly by having the Secretary General directly address the polio issue in his remarks.

1C. OIC Ministerial Meeting: The OIC will also hold a ministerial meeting on the margins of UNGA, and Gokcen agreed it would be desirable to put the polio initiative on the ministers' agenda.

1D. S - Ihsanoglu Meeting: The OIC has requested a meeting

between the Secretary General and Secretary Clinton to occur in September or October in New York or Washington. This meeting -- should it be scheduled -- could include polio as an agenda item and produce a joint statement in support of the President's initiative.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The U.S. team found itself pushing on an open door. The OIC is ready to cooperate, although its limited resources are likely best used in creating a high level buzz around the issue of eradicating polio while technical and financial resources are sought elsewhere, possibly from the GCC. The 40th anniversary of the OIC event along with the ministerial meetings on the margins of the UNGA could be prime opportunities to promote the initiative among OIC members and the global community. An opportunity for a follow-up to the July 26 meeting is possible in September or October and would be useful to keep longer-term plans moving. END COMMENT.  
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